

Preparing for the flu season

Campbell County Officials would like for you and your family to be safe during the upcoming flu season and would like to provide precautions against contracting the swine flu (H1N1) virus.

This fall, as every other, people will start making preparations to weather the flu season; but in addition, another potentially serious strain, the swine flu (H1N1) virus, may complicate things. Similar to seasonal flu, with swine flu, symptoms include a fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, achiness, headache, chills and fatigue. Swine flu may cause diarrhea and vomiting in some cases. Just like seasonal flu, it can be severe and potentially deadly.

For those with an underlying medical condition or weak immune system, the swine flu virus can be extremely dangerous. So far, it's been most contagious among children and young adults age 6 months to 24 years. Nevertheless, following the correct precaution methods can lower your chance of contracting this virus – simple precautions such as routine hand washing with soap and water, and coughing into your elbow or tissue, not your hands, can suffice.

It is extremely important to stay at home if you are sick, and start planning now in the event that one of your children gets the flu; talk with your employer about what to do if this were to happen. If you're a medical provider, make sure that you are well-prepared to deal with the influx of patients without getting overburdened.

Scientists at the National Institute of Health, the CDC, and the Food and Drug Administration are working with vaccine manufacturers to produce a vaccine against the swine flu. It is hoped that the vaccine will be ready by mid-fall; however, doses may be limited to certain groups of people dependent on their age and medical condition.

For more information on swine flu in Northern Kentucky, please visit the Northern Kentucky Health Department's Web site at <http://www.nkyhealth.org/swineflu>. The site provides guidance to prepare for, prevent, and respond to an outbreak.